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New York

Co-Chairperson: El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba ..... (President of the Gabonese Republic)
Co-Chairperson: Mr. Göran Persson ..... (Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I declare open the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005, held in accordance with Assembly resolutions 58/291 of 6 May 2004, 59/145 of 17 December 2004 and 59/291 of 15 April 2005, under items 48 and 121 of the provisional agenda.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): A little more than two months ago, terrorism struck again — Sharm el-Sheikh was added to the list of places hit by ruthless acts of violence.

A little more than two weeks ago, hurricane Katrina swept across the southern United States, ending lives, forcing many to flee their homes and causing immense damage.

Two days ago — and it could even have been today — a famished boy sat on dusty ground in a small village in Niger, waiting for aid to come. A small boy lacking the most vital necessities of life — food, water and medicine. A child — one of millions of malnourished children in the world today. Sharm el-Sheikh, New Orleans and Niger are painful examples of the challenges facing us today.

Most of those challenges respect no borders. Most of them are linked, and most of them can be met only if we work together. In this age of globalization, we should regard international cooperation as part of our national interest. The United Nations and the way we approach collective security must be adapted to changing circumstances. The United Nations is our prime instrument for effective multilateral solutions and a rule-based international order.

At this summit, we have an opportunity to take decisions that may shape international cooperation for years to come. We have come here because we know that the challenges facing us in the era of globalization cannot be met in isolation. Poverty must be eradicated, the resources of our planet used sustainably, human rights respected, equality between men and women strengthened, HIV/AIDS and other diseases prevented, terrorism stopped and disarmament and non-proliferation secured.

We, the heads of State and Government, owe that to coming generations. We cannot afford to fail. We need to find collective solutions based on the rule of law. And for that, we need a stronger United Nations.

Five years ago, at the outset of the new millennium, we met here to address key challenges for the future of mankind. Our response included a set of ambitious, yet realistic goals for development. We

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committed ourselves to concrete action within specific time frames.

Now we have reached a moment of truth. It is time to take stock and evaluate. What have we achieved? Where have we failed? There has been good progress in several areas. That tells us something very important: eliminating global poverty is not a forlorn hope. It can be done. Development works, but the challenge is to make it work everywhere, for everyone.

In critical areas, such as environmental sustainability or child and maternal mortality, there has been very little progress. Given current trends, there is a real risk that many of the poorest countries will fall far short of achieving the Millennium Goals. If we allow that to happen, millions of lives will be lost and we will pass on a more unfair and unsafe world to the next generation. So this Summit must focus on how to get the fight against world poverty back on track.

A peaceful world requires collective measures for the prevention of war, international cooperation to solve economic and social problems, and respect for human rights. Those are the pillars of the United Nations Charter and the agenda for our efforts to free future generations from war, poverty and life without dignity.

The Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom" describes the close links between peace and security, development and human rights. It maps the direction for the United Nations of the future. It reminds us of what we must seek to accomplish in the areas of development, freedom and peace. Only when every human being can live a life in freedom from want and in freedom from fear will that task be complete.

We need a relevant and efficient United Nations. We need a strong United Nations that upholds our collective security system. Greater emphasis must be put on prevention of conflict and early action. Our responsibility to protect our populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing and violations of human rights must be at the forefront.

We also need better tools to support States in post-conflict situations and help them avoid renewed tension and secure sustainable development. Establishing a new institution, a peacebuilding commission, is of key significance in that regard. Most of us agree that reform of the United Nations will not be complete without a change of the composition of the Security Council. In that agreement, we have an important basis for further progress. Our different views today must not prevent us from continuing the search for a solution tomorrow.

Those are some of the issues that we will be addressing at this High-level Plenary Meeting. Yesterday, a substantive outcome document, prepared skilfully by Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, was endorsed. During the next three days of debate, I look forward to hearing a diversity of views and constructive ideas for the future.

We do not lack great words or declarations, nor do we lack the capacity to act, but declarations and real actions must be brought much closer together. And it is we, the political leaders, who must show the way. As Dag Hammarskjöld said to this Assembly in 1957, when he was reappointed Secretary-General of the United Nations:

> "The many who, together, form this Organization — peoples, governments, and individuals — share one great responsibility. Future generations may come to say of us that we never achieved what we set out to do. May they never be entitled to say that we failed because we lacked faith or permitted narrow self-interest to distort our efforts." (*A/PV.690*, para. 74)

Today we must rise above short-term interests and invest in the future for generations to come. It is a matter of solidarity, not just between peoples, nations and continents, but with our children and grandchildren.

Let us take advantage of this great opportunity, and our presence here, to live up to our commitments in the Millennium Declaration and the Development Goals. Let us change the life of the boy from Niger, change the lives of the many. Let each and every one of us do whatever we can to contribute to the great enterprise of building a better United Nations for the benefit of all mankind.

I now give the floor to His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic and Co-Chairperson of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The United States of America has just experienced a difficult and painful time of trial brought on by the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. As our work in

New York is just beginning, I wish once again to convey our solidarity and sympathy to the people and authorities of the United States.

It is a great pleasure for me to co-preside with you, Sir, the Prime Minister of Sweden, over this important summit of heads of State and Government. It is important because it must enable us to assess the initiatives taken by the United Nations since the early 1990s to meet the challenges and threats facing humankind. I take this opportunity solemnly to thank all States Members of the United Nations that, at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, supported the Gabonese presidency, which was also assumed on behalf of Africa.

Five years ago, right here, we adopted the Millennium Declaration. It reaffirmed our collective faith in our Organization and its Charter, which is crucial to a world of peace, prosperity and justice. It also expressed, through the set of recommendations and decisions adopted, our determination to build that world.

Today, we must acknowledge that we are far from our goal. As regards peace and collective security, we are seeing an increase in acts of violence throughout the world. In the Middle East, despite some notable progress, peace is not yet definitive or sustainable. In Africa, while armed conflicts have been reduced in recent years, they continue to undermine far too many regions of our continent. In Asia, there remain several hotbeds of tension. Disease and poverty continue to weigh heavily on millions of people in developing countries.

Some initiatives have been taken recently to promote development. Accordingly, I pay special tribute to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Tony Blair, the European Union and the Group of Eight for all of their recent measures of support for development. I should also like to welcome the signal contribution of the President of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, who has proposed new sources of financing for development. I also note the combined efforts of the Presidents of Brazil, France and other counties to eradicate poverty throughout the world. Finally, I wish to point to the recent decision taken by the Group of 77 and China to establish a development fund within the framework of South-South cooperation.

All of those efforts seek to implement the Millennium Declaration. Clearly, the declaration to be adopted at the end of this summit must not be just another statement. I hope that a new impetus will be born and that our summit will mark a new departure and a new commitment imbued with pragmatism to respond tangibly to the challenges that face us.

The African countries have resolutely embarked upon that path. They have established the New Partnership for Africa's Development. To us, development, the fight against poverty, and good governance are the objects of our daily struggle. As to my country, Gabon, important measures have been taken to further mobilize our national resources in order to establish the basis for sustainable, diversified growth, build progress and eradicate poverty. We want to stem poverty, inter alia, by combating AIDS, in particular by providing free care to the poorest victims and by building mobile treatment centres throughout the country. Furthermore, good governance has been reinforced and transparency improved, while sectorial incentives have been established.

We are all well aware that Africa faces enormous challenges in the international context. It is therefore our duty to act together to give future generations a better world. We all recognize today that there can be no genuine peace without a development project. It would be futile to attempt to build lasting development without peace and security. We welcome the fact that the draft declaration stresses various important aspects relating to urgent matters of collective peace and security.

Many countries, particularly in Africa, will need such a framework to help them embark on the path of peace, political stability and economic recovery. I note with interest the prospects for the adoption by next year of a general convention against terrorism. Peace, human rights and the rule of law are universal and indivisible. We must therefore give greater support to multilateral mechanisms that promote and protect human rights.

Because ours is a global world that must be interdependent and unified, our common Organization, the United Nations, must be enabled fully to play its role. It has to be made an effective tool for building a multilateral system of benefit to all. I am pleased that the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly established the basis for such reform. I welcome the work done by the President and his team, as well as by the Secretariat and all Member States.

As we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization, it is crucial that the reform process be carried through. We therefore need to make a new start with our draft declaration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Secretary-General: Two years ago, speaking from this rostrum, I said that we stood at a fork in the road. I did not mean that the United Nations, marking its sixtieth anniversary this year, was in existential crisis. The Organization remains fully engaged in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, defence of human rights and development around the world.

No, I meant that deep divisions among Member States and the underperformance of our collective institutions were preventing us from coming together to meet the threats we face and seize the opportunities before us. The clear danger was that States of all kinds might increasingly resort to self-help, leading to a proliferation of ad hoc responses that would be divisive, destabilizing and dangerous. To help the Member States chart a more hopeful course, I appointed the High-level Panel and commissioned the Millennium Project. Their reports set the agenda for reform.

Drawing on those reports and the early reactions of Member States, as well as my own conviction that our work must be based on respect for human rights, I put forward six months ago a balanced set of proposals for decisions at this summit. Those proposals were ambitious, but I believed they were necessary, given the era of peril and promise in which we live, and I believed they were achievable if the political will was there.

Since then, under the able leadership of President Ping, representatives have been negotiating an outcome document for this summit. They have worked hard right up to the last minute, and yesterday they produced a document that is now before the Assembly.

Even before they finished their work, this summit served as a trigger for progress on critical issues. In recent months, a Democracy Fund has been created and a convention against nuclear terrorism has been finalized. Most important of all, an additional $50 billion a year has been unleashed to fight poverty by 2015. The 0.7 target has gained new support, innovative sources of financing are now coming to fruition, and there has been progress on debt relief.

By Members' agreement on the outcome document, those achievements will be locked in. Progress on development will be matched by commitments to good governance and national plans to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Millions of lives and the hopes of billions rest on the implementation of those and other pledges to fight poverty, disease, illiteracy and inequality, and on development remaining at the centre of trade negotiations in the year ahead.

The adoption of the outcome document will achieve vital breakthroughs in other areas as well. Members will condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever, for whatever purpose. They will pledge to seek agreement on a comprehensive anti-terrorism convention in the coming year, and they will signal their support for a strategy to make sure that we fight terrorism in a way that makes the international community stronger and terrorists weaker, not the other way around.

For the first time, they will accept, clearly and unambiguously, that they will have a collective response and a collective responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. They will make clear their willingness to take timely and decisive and collective action through the Security Council when peaceful means prove inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their own populations. They will be pledged to act if another Rwanda looms.

Members will agree to establish a peacebuilding commission, backed by a support office and a fund. That will mark a new level of strategic commitment to one of the most important contributions the United Nations makes to international peace and security. They will also agree to create a standing police capacity for the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

They will agree to double the budget of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to strengthen her office. They will also agree that the failures of the Human Rights Commission must be remedied by establishing a new human rights council, the details of which must now be worked out during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

They will strengthen early humanitarian funding to prevent hidden emergencies remaining forgotten, as

we have seen happen too often, particularly in Africa. And they will put in place a framework for a far-reaching Secretariat and management reform, which must be followed up and implemented. An independent oversight committee and ethics office, on which I will be giving members more details in the near future, will help ensure accountability and integrity, while the review of old mandates, the overhaul of rules on budget and human resources, and a one-time buy-out of staff will help realign the Secretariat to the priorities of the Organization in the twenty-first century.

Taken together, this amounts to a far-reaching package of changes. But let us be frank with each other and with the peoples of the United Nations. We have not yet achieved the sweeping and fundamental reform that I and many others believe is required. Sharp differences, some of them substantive and legitimate, have played their part in preventing that.

Our biggest challenge and our biggest failing are on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Twice this year — at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and now at this summit — we have allowed posturing to get in the way of results. That is inexcusable. Weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all, particularly in a world threatened by terrorists with global ambitions and no inhibitions. We must pick up the pieces in order to renew negotiations on that vital issue, and we should support the efforts Norway has been making to find a basis for doing so. Likewise, Security Council reform has for the moment eluded us, even though everyone broadly agrees that it is long overdue.

The fact that Members have not reached agreement on those and other issues does not render them any less urgent. So this package is a good start. On some issues, we have real breakthroughs. On others, we have narrowed our differences and made progress. On others again, we remain worryingly far apart. We must now turn to the next stages in the reform process.

First, we must implement what has been agreed. The coming session of the General Assembly will be one of its most important, and we must give our support to President Eliasson as he assumes his duties. We must get the peacebuilding commission and the human rights council up and running, conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism, and make sure the Democracy Fund starts working effectively. And the coming years will test our resolve to halve poverty by 2015, to act if genocide looms again, and to improve our success rate in building peace in war-torn countries. Those are the tests that really matter.

Secondly, we must keep working with determination on the tough issues on which progress is urgent but has not yet been achieved. Because one thing has emerged clearly from the process on which we embarked two years ago: Whatever our differences, in our interdependent world, we stand or fall together. Whether our challenge is peacemaking, nation-building, democratization or responding to natural or man-made disasters, we have seen that even the strongest amongst us cannot succeed alone.

At the same time, whether our task is fighting poverty, stemming the spread of disease or saving innocent lives from mass murder, we have seen that we cannot succeed without the leadership of the strong and the engagement of all. And we have been reminded, again and again, that to ignore basic principles of democracy, of human rights, of the rule of law for the sake of expediency undermines confidence in our collective institutions in building a world that is freer, fairer and safer for all.

That is why a healthy, effective United Nations is so vital. If properly utilized, it can be a unique marriage of power and principle in the service of all the world's peoples. And that is why this reform process matters and must continue. No matter how frustrating things are, no matter how difficult agreement is, there is no escaping the fact that the challenges of our time must be met by action — and today, more than ever, action must be collective if it is to be effective.

For my part, I am ready to work with Members on the challenges that remain, on implementing what has been agreed and on continuing to reform the culture and practice of the Secretariat. We must restore confidence in the Organization's integrity, impartiality and ability to deliver — for the sake of our dedicated staff and of those vulnerable and needy people throughout the world who look to the United Nations for support.

It is for their sake, not Members' or mine, that this reform agenda matters. It is to save their lives, to protect their rights, and to ensure their safety and freedom, that we simply must find effective collective

responses to the challenges of our time. I urge world leaders, individually and collectively, to keep working on this reform agenda — to have the patience to persevere and the vision needed to forge a real consensus.

We must find what President Franklin Roosevelt once called "the courage to fulfil our responsibilities in an admittedly imperfect world". I am not sure we have done that yet, but I believe all of us now understand that we need to do it. Precisely because our world is imperfect, we need the United Nations.

Addresses on the occasion of the High-level Plenary Meeting

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America.

President Bush: I thank Members for the privilege of being here for the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations and for their dedication to the vital work and great ideals of this institution.

We meet at a time of great challenge for America and the world. At this moment, men and women along my country's Gulf coast are recovering from one of the worst natural disasters in American history. Many have lost homes, loved ones and all their earthly possessions. In Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, whole neighbourhoods have been lifted from their foundations and sent crashing into the streets. A great American city is working to turn the flood waters and reclaim its future.

We have witnessed the awesome power of nature and the greater power of human compassion. Americans have responded to their neighbours in need, and so have many of the nations represented in this Hall. Altogether, more than 115 countries and nearly a dozen international organizations have stepped forward with offers of assistance. To every nation, every province and every community across the world that is standing with the American people in this hour of need, I offer the thanks of my nation.

Their response, like the response to last year's tsunami, has shown once again that the world is more compassionate and hopeful when we act together. That truth was the inspiration for the United Nations. The United Nations founding Members laid out great and honourable goals in the Charter they drafted six decades ago. That document commits this Organization to work to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights" and "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". We remain committed to those noble ideals. As we respond to great humanitarian needs, we must actively respond to the other great challenges of our time. We must continue to work together to ease suffering, spread freedom and lay the foundations of lasting peace for our children and grandchildren.

In this young century, the far corners of the world are linked more closely than ever before and no nation can remain isolated and indifferent to the struggles of others. When a country or a region is filled with despair and resentment and vulnerable to violent and aggressive ideologies, the threat passes easily across oceans and borders and could threaten the security of any peaceful country.

Terrorism fed by anger and despair has come to Tunisia, to Indonesia, to Kenya, to Tanzania, to Morocco, to Israel, to Saudi Arabia, to the United States, to Turkey, to Spain, to Russia, to Egypt, to Iraq and to the United Kingdom. And those who have not seen attacks on their own soil have still shared in the sorrow — from Australians killed in Bali to Italians killed in Egypt to the citizens of dozens of nations who were killed on 11 September 2001 here in the city where we meet. The lesson is clear: There can be no safety in looking away or seeking the quiet life by ignoring the hardship and oppression of others. Either hope will spread or violence will spread, and we must take the side of hope.

Sometimes our security will require confronting threats directly, and so a great coalition of nations has come together to fight the terrorists across the world. We have worked together to help break up terrorist networks that cross borders and to root out radical cells within our borders. We have eliminated terrorist sanctuaries. We are using our diplomatic and financial tools to cut off their financing and drain them of support. And as we fight, the terrorists must know that the world stands united against them. We must complete the comprehensive convention on international terrorism that will put every nation on record. The targeting and deliberate killing by terrorists of civilians and non-combatants cannot be justified or legitimized by any cause or grievance.

And the world's free nations are determined to stop the terrorists and their allies from acquiring the terrible weapons that would allow them to kill on a scale equal to their hatred. For that reason, more than 60 countries are supporting the Proliferation Security Initiative to intercept shipments of weapons of mass destruction on land, at sea and in the air. The terrorists must know that wherever they go, they cannot escape justice. Later today, the Security Council has an opportunity to put the terrorists on notice when it votes on a draft resolution that condemns the incitement of terrorist acts and calls upon all States to take appropriate steps to end such incitement. We also need to sign and implement the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism so that all those who seek radioactive materials or nuclear devices are prosecuted and extradited wherever they are. We must send a clear message to the rulers of outlaw regimes that sponsor terror and pursue weapons of mass murder: You will not be allowed to threaten the peace and stability of the world.

Confronting our enemies is essential, and so civilized nations will continue to take the fight to the terrorists. Yet we know that this war will not be won by force of arms alone. We must defeat the terrorists on the battlefield, and we must also defeat them in the battle of ideas. We must change the conditions that allow terrorists to flourish and recruit by spreading the hope of freedom to millions who have never known it. We must help raise up the failing States and stagnant societies that provide fertile ground for terrorists. We must defend and extend a vision of human dignity, opportunity and prosperity — a vision far stronger than the dark appeal of resentment and murder.

To spread a vision of hope, the United States is determined to help nations that are struggling with poverty. We are committed to the Millennium Development Goals. That is an ambitious agenda that includes cutting global poverty and hunger in half, ensuring that every boy and girl in the world has access to primary education, and halting the spread of AIDS — all by 2015. We have a moral obligation to help others and a moral duty to make sure our actions are effective. At Monterrey in 2002, we agreed to a new vision for the way we fight poverty, curb corruption, and provide aid in this new millennium. Developing countries agreed to take responsibility for their own economic progress through good governance, sound policies and the rule of law. Developed countries agreed to support those efforts, including increased aid to nations that undertake necessary reforms. My own country has sought to implement the Monterrey Consensus by establishing the new Millennium Challenge Account. That account is increasing United States aid for countries that govern justly, invest in their people and promote economic freedom.

More needs to be done. I call on all the world's nations to implement the Monterrey Consensus. Implementing the Monterrey Consensus means continuing on the long, hard road to reform. Implementing the Monterrey Consensus means creating a genuine partnership between developed and developing countries to replace the donor-client relationship of the past. And implementing the Monterrey Consensus means welcoming all developing countries as full participants in the global economy, with all the requisite benefits and responsibilities.

Tying aid to reform is essential to eliminating poverty, but our work does not end there. For many countries, AIDS, malaria and other diseases are both humanitarian tragedies and significant obstacles to development. We must give poor countries access to the emergency lifesaving drugs they need to fight those infectious epidemics. Through our bilateral programmes and the Global Fund, the United States will continue to lead the world in providing the resources to defeat the plague of HIV/AIDS.

Today, America is working with local authorities and organizations in the largest initiative in history to combat a specific disease. Across Africa, we are helping local health officials expand AIDS-testing facilities, train and support doctors and nurses and counselors, and upgrade clinics and hospitals. Working with our African partners, we have now delivered lifesaving treatment to more than 230,000 people in sub-Sahara Africa. We are ahead of schedule to meet an important objective: providing HIV/AIDS treatment for nearly 2 million adults and children in Africa. At the G-8 summit at Gleneagles, Scotland, we set a clear goal — an AIDS-free generation in Africa — and I challenge every Member of the United Nations to take concrete steps to achieve that goal.

We are also working to fight malaria. That preventable disease kills more than a million people around the world every year and leaves poverty and grief in every land it touches. The United States has set a goal of cutting the malaria death rate in half in at

least 15 highly endemic African countries. To achieve that goal, we have pledged to increase our funding for malaria treatment and prevention by more than $1.2 billion over the next five years. We invite other nations to join us in that effort by committing specific aid to the dozens of other African nations in need of it. Together we can fight malaria, save hundreds of thousands of lives, and bring new hope to countries that have been devastated by that terrible disease.

As we strengthen our commitments to fighting malaria and AIDS, we must also remain on the offensive against new threats to public health, such as the avian influenza. If left unchallenged, that virus could cause the first pandemic of the twenty-first century. We must not allow that to happen. Today, I am announcing a new international partnership on avian and pandemic influenza. The partnership requires countries that face an outbreak to immediately share information and provide samples to the World Health Organization. By requiring transparency, we can respond more rapidly to dangerous outbreaks and stop them in time. Many nations have already joined the partnership, and we invite all nations to participate. It is essential that we work together; as we do so we fulfil a moral duty to protect our citizens, heal the sick and comfort the afflicted.

Even with increased aid to fight disease and to reform economies, many nations are held back by another heavy challenge: the burden of debt. So America and many nations have also acted to lift that burden, which limits the growth of developing economies and holds millions of people in poverty. Today, poor countries with the heaviest debt burdens are receiving more than $30 billion in debt relief. In order to prevent the build-up of future debt, my country and other nations have agreed that international financial institutions should increasingly provide new aid in the form of grants, rather than loans. The Group of Eight (G-8) agreed at Gleneagles to go further. In order to break the lend-and-forgive cycle permanently, we agreed to cancel 100 per cent of the debt of the world's most heavily indebted nations. I call upon the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to finalize that historic agreement as soon as possible.

We will fight to lift the burden of poverty in places of suffering — not just for the moment, but permanently. The surest path to greater wealth is greater trade. In a letter he wrote to me in August, the Secretary-General commended the G-8's work, but told me that aid and debt relief are not enough. The Secretary-General said that we also need to reduce trade barriers and subsidies that are holding developing economies back. I agree with the Secretary-General: the Doha round is the most promising way to achieve that goal.

A successful Doha round will reduce and eliminate tariffs and other barriers on farm and industrial goods. It will end unfair agricultural subsidies. It will open up global markets for services. Under Doha, every nation will gain — and the developing world stands to gain the most. Historically, developing nations that open themselves up to trade grow at several times the rate of other countries. The elimination of trade barriers could lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty over the next 15 years. The stakes are high. The lives and the future of millions of the world's poorest citizens hang in the balance — and so we must bring the Doha trade talks to a successful conclusion.

Doha is an important step towards a larger goal: we must tear down the walls that separate the developed and developing worlds. We need to give the citizens of the poorest nations the same ability to access the world economy that people of wealthy nations have, so that they can offer their goods and talents on the world market alongside everyone else. We need to ensure that they have the same opportunities to pursue their dreams, provide for their families and live lives of dignity and self-reliance.

The greatest obstacles to achieving those goals are the tariffs, subsidies and barriers that isolate the people of developing nations from the great opportunities of the twenty-first century. Today, I reiterate a challenge that I have made before: we must work together in the Doha negotiations to eliminate agricultural subsidies that distort trade and stunt development, and to eliminate tariffs and other barriers to open markets for farmers throughout the world. Today, I am broadening the challenge by making this pledge: the United States is ready to eliminate all tariffs, subsidies and other barriers to the free flow of goods and services as other nations do the same. That is the key to overcoming poverty in the world's poorest nations. It is essential that we promote prosperity and opportunity for all nations.

By expanding trade, we spread hope and opportunity to the corners of the world and strike a

blow against the terrorists, who feed on anger and resentment. Our agenda for freer trade is part of our agenda for a freer world in which people can live and worship and raise their children as they choose. In the long run, the best way to protect religious freedom and the rights of women and minorities is through institutions of self-rule, which allow people to assert and defend their own rights. All who stand for human rights must also stand for human freedom.

This is a moment of great opportunity in the cause of freedom. Throughout the world, hearts and minds are opening to the message of human liberty as never before. In the last two years alone, tens of millions have voted in free elections in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Georgia. And as they claim their freedom, they are inspiring millions more across the broader Middle East. We must encourage their aspirations. We must nurture freedom's progress. And the United Nations has a vital role to play.

Through the new United Nations Democracy Fund, the democratic Members of the United Nations will work to help others who want to join the democratic world. It is fitting that the world's largest democracy, India, has taken a leadership role in this effort, pledging $10 million to get the Fund started. Every free nation has an interest in the success of the Fund — and every free nation has a responsibility in advancing the cause of liberty.

The work of democracy is larger than holding a fair election; it requires building the institutions that sustain freedom. Democracy takes different forms in different cultures, yet all free societies have certain things in common. Democratic nations uphold the rule of law, impose limits on the power of the State and treat women and minorities as full citizens. Democratic nations protect private property, free speech and religious expression. Democratic nations grow in strength because they reward and respect the creative gifts of their people. And democratic nations contribute to peace and stability because they seek national greatness in the achievements of their citizens, not the conquest of their neighbours.

For those reasons, the whole world has a vital interest in the success of a free Iraq — and no civilized nation has an interest in seeing a new terror State emerge in that country. So the free world is working together to help the Iraqi people to establish a new nation that can govern itself, sustain itself and defend itself. This is an exciting opportunity for all of us in this Hall. The United Nations played a vital role in the success of the January elections, in which eight and a half million Iraqis defied the terrorists and cast their ballots. Since then, the United Nations has supported Iraq's elected leaders as they drafted a new Constitution. The United Nations and its Member States must continue to stand by the Iraqi people as they complete the journey to a fully constitutional Government. When Iraqis have completed their journey, their success will inspire others to claim their freedom. The Middle East will grow in peace and hope and liberty, and all of us will live in a safer world.

The advance of freedom and security is the calling of our time. It is the mission of the United Nations. The United Nations was created to spread the hope of liberty, to fight poverty and disease and to help secure human rights and human dignity for all the world's people. To help make those promises real, the United Nations must be strong and efficient, free from corruption and accountable to the people it serves. The United Nations must stand for integrity — and live by the high standards it sets for others. Meaningful institutional reforms must include measures to improve internal oversight, identify cost savings and ensure that precious resources are used for their intended purpose.

The United Nations has taken the first steps towards reform. The process will continue in the General Assembly this fall, and the United States will join with others to lead the effort. The process of reform begins with Members taking our responsibilities seriously. When this great institution's Member States choose notorious abusers of human rights to sit on the United Nations Human Rights Commission, they discredit a noble effort and undermine the credibility of the whole Organization. If Member countries want the United Nations to be respected and effective, they should begin by making sure that it is worthy of respect.

At the start of a new century, the world needs the United Nations to live up to its ideals and fulfil its mission. The founding Members of this Organization knew that the security of the world would increasingly depend on advancing the rights of humankind, and that would require the work of many hands. After committing America to the idea of the United Nations in 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt declared: "The structure of world peace cannot be the work of one

man, or one party, or one nation." Peace is the responsibility of every nation and every generation.

In each era of history, the human spirit has been challenged by the forces of darkness and chaos. Some challenges are the acts of nature; others are the works of man. This Organization was convened to meet these challenges by harnessing the best instincts of humankind, the strength of the world, united in common purpose. With courage and conscience, we will meet our responsibilities to protect the lives and rights of others. And when we do, we will help fulfil the promise of the United Nations and ensure that every human being enjoys the peace and the freedom and the dignity our Creator intended for all.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind members that, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, the General Assembly will hold a separate meeting on Financing for Development in this Hall. Delegates are invited to remain seated for that meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.